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ABSTRACT

When professional movers are hired to move a library collection, drawing up written specifications becomes the most important part of the planning process. Specifications explain exactly what needs to be done, form the basis for a legal contract, and provide the basis for determining the cost of the job. Precision is an important component of writing specifications, and existing specifications may serve as helpful examples. Additional considerations include: (1) beginning the specifications with a brief and general statement of the scope and purpose of the move; (2) scheduling a mandatory conference and site inspection for all interested movers; (3) determining the type of shelf transfer to be used; (4) asking the mover to submit a proposed logistical plan; (5) understanding the mover's tagging system; (6) meeting with the mover's supervisory personnel; (7) using floor plans; (8) specifying the amount and type of experience the moving personnel should have; (9) specifying the type of equipment to be used; (10) specifying a moving schedule; (11) ensuring that the mover assumes responsibility for protecting the property being moved and the premises in which the move is taking place; (12) making security arrangements; (13) ensuring that the mover will provide adequate cleaning services; and (14) determining any legal considerations. (KM)

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PLANNING FOR THE COLLECTION MOVE

by Eugene S. Mitchell

At some time or other, most librarians face the task of moving a library collection, either into a new building, into expanded stacks, or into a new arrangement in existing stacks. Although many will meet this challenge by planning and implementing the move themselves, some will hire a professional mover to do the job for them. When this is the case, drawing up a written set of specifications becomes the most important part of the planning process because all aspects of the job must be identified and described completely in clear and concrete terms.

Written specifications are important for at least three reasons: they explain exactly what needs to be done, they form the basis for a legal contract, and they provide the basis for determining the cost of the job. Since this may be the only opportunity to state precisely what has to be done, it should not be squandered. Rather, it should be looked upon as the most important investment of time and thought in the entire project. Since many librarians will deal with a mover only once or twice during their careers and since they may not have had much experience in drawing up specifications, the following considerations should prove helpful.

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State exactly what has to be done. Once a contract is made formal, the mover is bound to do what is specified. If he makes a mistake, he must either correct it or compensate for it. Likewise, if you agree to perform some part of the work, and you fail or make a mistake, you will have to correct the situation. If your mistake results in a delay, the mover may charge you for lost time. In short, the mover will be responsible for everything you specify as his responsibility but you will be responsible for both those tasks which you acknowledge as your responsibility and those which you do not specify at all. Do not overlook the obvious and do not take anything for granted.

It may be helpful to examine samples of other move specifications. If you work for a publicly supported library, there may be standard specifications for moving services already in existence. Some movers are willing to help prepare specifications or provide samples of those used on other jobs. If you know of anyone who has used professional movers to move their library, ask them for copies of the specifications they used.

In addition to these general recommendations, there are some specific points to consider when planning for a collection move.

Scope. Begin the specifications with a brief and general statement of the purpose and scope of the move. This statement should highlight the main parts of the job sufficiently to give a clear idea of its nature. Specify such items as the location of the move, any problems which might be encountered, and any relationships between the mover and other contractors who may also be working during the move.

Movers Conference and Site Inspection. Schedule a single mandatory conference for all interested movers. This will allow the movers to examine the premises in which they will be working and obtain any supplementary information they might need in order to make an accurate estimate or bid. Anyone who does not attend the movers conference should not be allowed to submit an estimate or bid. Keep a register of all attendees and make a transcript, either written or taped, of the conference. Information given at a movers conference forms part of an addendum which serves as a written amplification of the specifications. Do not answer any question unless certain of the answer. If an answer cannot be given at the conference, mail a written response later to everyone who attended.

Shelf Transfer. Some of the major planning considerations will stem from the type of shelf transfer involved. A move from an old building to new quarters requires a shelf-to-shelf transfer: books taken from one shelf in the old building are placed on a designated shelf in the new. A move involving the integration of several collections presents a more complex task. This move must be planned in such a way as to insure that all of the different collections come together in the right place, in the right order, and at the right time. Still other problems occur when rearranging the stacks or the collection in an existing facility. In this case some space must be found to store an appropriate part of the collection so that room is made available to start shifting the collection around. Whatever the type of shelf transfer involved, specify it clearly and specify that the mover have experience with that type of transfer.

Logistical Plan. Ask the mover to submit a statement in narrative form of the proposed logistical plan for accomplishing the work described in the specifications. This statement should be as concise as possible and should include all pertinent details. It will prove extremely useful when evaluating bids or estimates submitted by several movers. Such a statement should

describe all the equipment, materials, and personnel to be used as well as the actual strategy for the move.

"Tagging". When speaking with the mover or reviewing bids or estimates, some reference may be made to a "tagging" system. The term refers to the process by which the mover indicates where materials in the present location should eventually end up. Often tags or labels will actually be placed on the shelves or books themselves to indicate where they should be transferred. The tagging system should be keyed to the final arrangement, either on a set of floor plans or on the shelves themselves. One important point to keep clear is that the mover's tagging system will not be based on the classification scheme of the library. When a mover tags, he is primarily interested in identifying the amount of books to be moved, their present location, and their new location. It is extremely important to understand the mover's tagging system in order to determine whether he is preparing or executing the move properly.

Preparation with the Mover. At some point after the award of the contract and before the start of the move, meet with the mover's supervisory personnel in order to complete the planning. Specify when this should be done allowing at least several weeks

before the actual commencement of work. Decide such things as when to have new equipment and furniture delivered or installed; the precise schedule for the move; who will be working; any special arrangements which must be made for parking, breaks and meals; availability of staff; and so forth. In short, get together with the mover in sufficient time to put all the finishing touches on the planning for the job,

Floor Plans. Floor plans are used to show the arrangement and location of materials and equipment. They should be drawn to scale to insure that everything fits. If you are fortunate, you will have an architect or draftsman available to draw plans for you. Perhaps you have some old floor plans which you can use or trace. If you must draw them yourself, you can prepare a set of plans suitable for your purpose with a little understanding and careful measurement. A basic book on interior planning will provide some helpful guidance. The mover should supply and work from his own floor plans with the location of all materials indicated by his tagging system. This will allow you to check his plans and progress at any time during the move.

Personnel. Obviously the mover should use personnel who are physically able and properly trained to do the job. Since

library moves are so specialized and present some particular problems, specify the amount and type of experience the personnel should have. Specify recent experience in moving libraries similar to yours in size and organization (classification scheme). These specifications should apply at least to all supervisory personnel. Ask the mover to provide a list of recent clients and contact them to see if they were satisfied and to determine what, if any, problems they encountered. Indicate whether library staff will be involved in the actual move. Ideally, they should be involved only in planning and supervision.

Equipment. All equipment and supplies should be provided by the mover. Library equipment should not be used for a library move since most of it is not strong enough to withstand the heavy use and handling required. Specify the type of equipment to be used.

A note about the use of cardboard boxes to transport books as opposed to the use of bins or carts would be in order here. Boxes have several disadvantages: they can be misplaced, they may break, they can only be piled to a certain height before a stack begins to sag, risking collapse or breakage, and books may

be placed out of order when boxes are being packed or unpacked. Boxes may not prevent damage to books or bindings. Books are made to stand on their bottom edges and since they will experience a lot of shifting and jostling during the move, they will probably survive better if they are kept in their normal position as much as possible. Finally, the use of carts permits easier access to materials during the move.

Schedule. Specify the dates or the number of working days within which the move should take place and the time within which the mover must remedy any problems. You may even want to specify the hours during which the work must take place. Be prepared for changes. No matter how well you plan, many unanticipated problems will occur. Expect the unexpected.

Protection. The mover must assume responsibility for protecting the condition of the property being moved and the premised in which the move is taking place. In addition to the mover's general responsibility to protect library surfaces, he should protect carpeting in traffic areas, corners of walls and columns, and wall surfaces and elevator interiors. Of course the mover should be responsible for the replacement of any materials, equipment, furnishings, or parts of the building irreparably

damaged or lost during the move.

Security. Obtain a list of the names of individuals working on the job. Most movers provide uniforms and identification for their regular employees but they may not do so for any temporary employees they retain. Arrange for parking for the mover's vehicles if necessary. Check ahead of time with the local police or security department to see what arrangements must be made. Specify that any personal or library items found must be returned to a specific location.

Clean Up. The mover should always keep the premises free of excessive accumulation of waste and rubbish. At the completion of the move, he must remove all waste materials, equipment, and tools, and leave the area cleaned to your satisfaction. Some movers may offer specific cleaning services such as fumigating books, dusting or vacuuming shelves, or professional carpet cleaning.

Legal Considerations. All of the comments made above are suggested guidelines and no attempt has been made to discuss the legal aspects of hiring a moving contractor. Since you will probably not be solely responsible for the entire process of

selecting a mover and since your specifications may have to be submitted to some other agency or department for review and final preparation, consult with them to determine what legal considerations should be planned for and specified.

Obviously, this list is not complete, but it should help in instructuring planning and specification writing. The important point to remember is that librarians must plan as carefully and as thoroughly as possible for a collection move. The time spent in planning and preparing the specifications will be the greatest single contributing factor to success.